

**08/28/2007**

Dear Friend:

Yesterday, Alberto Gonzales did something he should have done a long time ago: He resigned. While I am saddened that a public official of such high responsibility squandered the American people's trust to such a degree, I believe that Gonzales' resignation is a step towards fixing the Justice Department and healing this country.

On July 31, I joined five other former prosecutors serving in the House in calling for a thorough investigation to determine whether Gonzales should be impeached. His resignation provides needed change at the Justice Department, but it does not provide the answers that the American people demand and deserve. I believe Congress still has an obligation to determine the legality of Attorney General Gonzales' confusing, conflicting and misleading actions and statements.

As Attorney General, Alberto Gonzales was bound by an extraordinary duty to seek justice in accordance with our Constitution and on behalf of the American people—a noble duty superseding any obligation of loyalty to party or administration. Over the last few months it became obvious to all that Alberto Gonzales was incapable of fulfilling this duty, and his conduct cast serious doubts on his willingness to protect the basic inherent freedoms of every citizen.

Even before he became Attorney General, Gonzales gave America reason to doubt his commitment to the rule of law. In 2002, Gonzales wrote a memorandum arguing that the protections accorded prisoners of war by the 1949 Geneva Conventions should not apply to suspected terrorists, and that national and international laws prohibiting torture do "not apply to the president's detention and interrogation of enemy combatants." This memo provided the justification for widespread abuse of detainees in Guantanamo Bay, Iraq, and Afghanistan. It undermined America's reputation in the eyes of the world and set a dangerous precedent for violations of international treaties by America's enemies.

As White House Counsel, Gonzales showed a willingness to support the president's agenda even at the expense of common decency. Most Americans are now familiar with an episode from March 10, 2004, in which, according to reports, Gonzales attempted to coerce a hospitalized John Ashcroft into signing off on a warrantless wiretapping program that would have gone beyond the surveillance programs already put in place by the Bush Administration. Only when top Justice Department officials threatened to resign did Gonzales agree to stop pushing his program. This episode is made even more disturbing by Gonzales' inconsistent and confusing statements when he was questioned on this topic by Congress.

As Attorney General, Gonzales presided over the politicization of the Justice Department. As a former Assistant U.S. Attorney and president of the American Association of Attorneys General, I know that the Justice Department must serve all

Americans, regardless of party or ideology. While the details are still unclear because of Administration stonewalling, what we do know about the U.S. Attorney scandal paints a picture of a Justice Department that served political goals at the expense of its commitment to the American people. Gonzales' behavior earned him the distrust of Justice Department staff and the American people, and it made his resignation unavoidable.

Attorney General Gonzales' resignation makes it possible to restore credibility to the Justice Department. I look forward to working with my colleagues to fully investigate Justice Department actions under Gonzales and build a better federal justice system. As always, I welcome your input. To contact me, please visit my website at [www.tomudall.house.gov](http://www.tomudall.house.gov).

Very Truly Yours,

*Tom Udall*  
Member of Congress